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ABSTRACT

Emphasizing the need for process rather than product-oriented education, this paper introduces a new conceptual model for observing the classroom as a total process. The new model is a blending of dramaturgic concepts and theory with the classroom teaching/learning process. The author draws an analogy based upon Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Pentad--blending Burke's concepts of act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose to facilitate understanding of the classroom elements of time, space, methodology, teacher, student, and motivation. The teacher and/or observer is provided with a conceptual framework which encompasses most of the basic elements functioning and interacting within a class period, teaching day, and/or full semester. (Author/LG)

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CLASSROOM AS PROCESS:

A DRAMATURGIC OBSERVATIONAL MODEL

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CS 500 1/2

Accountability is the by-word of the decade in education. It is one of the greatest boons and one of the greatest problems facing the educational system today. Principals, teachers, instructional aides, and coordinators are being forced to justify their methods and measurements of progress with their students. The American public is no longer willing to accept the traditional educational institution without written justification of its relevance.

The push to make schools accountable began in the 1950's. Conant and Rickover came to the fore as initial critics of this long-established American institution. Their major concern was with revisions and improvements in school curricula. They were succeeded by many critics, some writing for a much larger public than the institutional circles of education departments. Such authors as Holt, Leonard, Glasser, Silberman, Weingartner and Postman have written books which have had wide circulation with the general public.

Though a teacher may agree with Glasser that failing children is harmful in today's role-oriented society,[1] and though he may agree with Weingartner and Postman that when he tells students of the importance of a unit, he is often playing "Let's Pretend" for the sake of the curriculum guide,[2] he does not often have a real choice about grading procedures or major curricular changes. He is merely one cog in a very large system. Major changes suggested by modern critics come slowly in such a large institution.

One major change resulting from the accountability push is the use of behavioral objectives. Presently education journals are full of articles dealing with methods of writing behavioral objectives in order to justify the teaching of American children.[3] Behavioral objectives are statements used by the teacher to design and evaluate his lessons. When properly

written, they specifically state the purpose for the lesson and the measurable outcomes in student behavior. The student must perform (deal with concepts, demonstrate skills, regurgitate, memorize, etc.) to specified levels of accomplishment.

Behavioral objectives are beneficial to the teacher for they give him tangible proof of his accomplishment. They allow him measurable output. However, through them, accountability has taken on a product-orientation to education. By stressing observable outcomes, the emphasis is placed on the final product instead of the learning process. Concerning the product/process orientation in writing objectives, Robert Mager says:

> A course description describes various aspects of a process known as a "course." A course objective, on the other hand, is a description of a product, of what the learner is supposed to be like as a result of the process.[4]

The product-orientation in education is not limited to behavioral objectives. It is found in other relevant educational research today. In the product-orientation to educational research one variable is identified that is viewed as (1) of great importance and (2) operationalizable. Some of the important product-oriented studies are Binet on I.Q., Getzels on teaching styles, the Columbia curriculum studies, and Trump on administrative effectiveness. Though much of this research has been valuable, the product-orientation assumes a static "input-output" view of education. Though this may answer the accountability question for the present, education must take a process view to maintain this stance in the future.

Need for Process-Orientation

The largest problem with the product-orientation is its effect upon the individual teacher. The purpose of educational research is to improve the educational system and the individual educator within it. The result of the product-orientation has been the product-oriented teacher, who

stresses high grades, good test scores, and social classroom decorum. However important these categories may be, it is the task of research to increase teacher awareness of the process through which these products are derived.

Prior to employing the process concept in research, researchers must practically define this somewhat ambiguous term. David Berlo gives a clear, workable definition of process.

> If we accept the concept of process, we view the events and relationships as dynamic, on-going, ever-changing, continuous. When we label something as a process we also mean that it does not have a beginning, an end, a fixed sequence of events. It is not static, at rest. It is moving. The ingredients within a process interact; each affects all of the others.[5]

The classroom event is a process according to Berlo's definition. It is dynamic and moving. It has ingredients, or variables, which interact and affect each other. The process view poses a problem in research when the interaction of variables cause variable alterations during the process. Gerald Miller reinforces this possibility in his definition of process: "Process implies a continuous interaction of an indefinitely large number of variables with a concomitant, continuous change in the values taken by these variables."[6]

In dealing with changing values of variables, the deterministic approach to research no longer applies. Once entering the probabilistic world of variable interaction without manipulation, the educational researcher can be free to develop viable descriptive studies which allow for a fuller conceptualization of educational process.[7]

By examining a large number of variables in flux, as Miller describes, the individual teacher can find a clearer, more realistic concept of the actual process of teaching and learning. Both teaching and learning are processes. The research in verbal and non-verbal classroom interaction has begun to define teaching with a process-orientation. The work

of Bloom, Piaget, and Gagné in learning theory has developed sophisticated categorical schemes for learning as process. However, none of these attempt to define the total classroom experience in process terms. None provide the teacher with a clear, workable conceptualization of the interacting variables with which he must contend.

Need for a Comprehensive Conceptual Model

In addition to subject matter grasp and skill in teaching strategies, the successful teacher must have some workable conceptual scheme concerning what education is all about and his role in it.[8] Today most teachers have an adequate preparation in their subject matter areas and extensive training in skill development. The problem lies with their conceptualization of education and, specifically, with the internal classroom teaching/learning experience. They have not yet developed conceptual configurations which are complete and comprehensive. Thus, there is a need for research to provide such a conceptual scheme. This need is supported by Ralph Tyler, a curriculum researcher, in his paper to the First Annual Phi Delta Kappa Symposium on Educational Research:

> If when one entered a classroom he had no prior conceptualization of teaching and learning, he would see children and an adult, he would hear children and adult speaking, he would note physical items in the room, movement of the people and the like. What gives it meaning for the investigator of classroom instruction is a "model" which he conceives, a simplified picture of the structure and process of classroom instruction.[9]

If we accept Tyler's proposal, then the problem is one of finding a good conceptual "model" through which we as teachers or research observers can observe the classroom as total process. This model, to be complete and realistic, must include many variables. The identification of the variables is only the first step in the development of a model. The important classroom variables for this study are: given educational space

allotted time segment, teachers and students as assigned participants, materials to be used, objectives, and the socio-psychological aspects involved in human interaction such as motivation, expectations, self-concept, roles, etc. Such a model must also allow for change in variables through variable interaction. Only in this way will it attain the process-orientation necessary to account for a more comprehensive view of human behavior than is presently found in educational research.

In order to offset the predominant product-orientation spawned by accountability and behavioral objectives, educational researchers must develop comprehensive conceptual models which are process-oriented.

Dramaturgic Model

This paper introduces a new conceptual model for observing the classroom as a total process. The new model is a blending of dramaturgic concepts and theory with the classroom teaching/learning process. More specifically, it is an analogy based upon the Dramatistic Pentad of Kenneth Burke. The analogy blends Burke's concepts of act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose to better understand the classroom elements of time, space, methodology, teacher, student, and motivation. It provides the teacher and/or observer with a new conceptual framework which encompasses most of the basic elements functioning and interacting within a class period, teaching day, and/or full semester.

There are three major strengths in this particular observational model. The first and most important strength is the process-orientation of the dramaturgic observational model. The second is provision to account for five major variables in classroom interactive behavior. No other extant observational system allows the observer access to that many variables.[10] The third strength is provided by the Pentad Ratio System. This

system allows the observer to focus on the relationship between any two variables which seem most interesting at any given point in the movement of the interaction. Using this model, the observer is free to examine the dynamic changes in the variables as they interact. The observer is not bound to three-second observations, as in the Flanders system,[11] and is free to examine whichever variables or variable combinations seem most dominant or interesting at any point in the process-flow. Thus, this model offers a new conceptualization of classroom behavior which is both comprehensive and process-oriented.

Model Versus Analogy

The key elements in the study are "model" and "analogy." Both are methods of comparison. An analogy is an extended metaphor used to compare two separate entities. A model, according to Tyler, is a "simplified picture of a structure."[12] If it is a simplified picture of a reality, there must be some comparison between that reality and the picture to give the model value.

These terms can be used interchangeably. A model can be an analogy and vice versa. Max Black identifies four types of models: scale, analogue, mathematical, and theoretical. He says that, "Analogies are a means of transferring to a new situation the 'structure or web of relationships' of the original one."[13] Ronald Hyman discusses analogies to teaching by drawing the parallel that "what we can say about psychotherapy, athletics, or gardening, we will also be able to say about teaching, once we have shown that they have common features."[14] Thus, the dramaturgic model must draw the "common features" between dramaturgy and education in such a way that the relationship can prove fruitful to the "new situation"--the observation of classroom behavior.

Keying off of the Greek derivative of drama--"dram: to do, to act,"[15] we find that inherent in drama is the notion of movement, action, process. This is where the analogy begins to solve some of the problems which other educational research has not. The most vital element which a theatrical production and a class period have in common is process. They must both have movement, both enact something, and both progress within the limitations of time. If the progression is to be a successful, satisfying one, the objectives of both the teacher/director and the students/actors must be considered.

In addition to having process in common, both education and theatre establish their own milieu, a type of microcosmic world consisting of individuals whose goals, temperaments, and personalities will blend or clash at some point on a continuum on any given day. Another point becomes clearer in discussing education and theatre as microcosmic social worlds, for within this microcosmic setting, the dramaturgic unities of time and physicalization (space) can be, and must be considered within their micro-setting. How the teacher determines the value of a twenty-minute mod, for example, is similar to the director's decision about the length of the first act. Space is also an important factor for both teacher and director The teacher must adjust to an open-spaced school just as the director must make certain adjustments for an arena stage setting. The teacher is sometimes director, sometimes playright, sometimes scene designer, sometimes actor. These are only some of the role choices and understanding these roles in terms of a dramaturgic analogy will help the teacher in both choosing and playing the necessary roles.

Burke's Dramatistic Pentad

The basic construct to be used in establishing the dramaturgic analogy is the Dramatistic Pentad of Kenneth Burke. Burke comes from a long line of social philosopher/theorists.[16] He can be categorized with Mead, Parsons, and Cooley in his search for a social model. In discussing Burke, Duncan says Burke sees social interaction as "a dramatic expression, an enactment of roles by individuals who seek to identify with each other in their search to create social order."[17] The Dramatistic Pentad is the system he designs to support this premise.

The Burkeian Dramatistic Pentad was designed to examine the drama of human relations. This model will apply it to the drama of classroom human relations. It is the simplest, yet the most comprehensive construct through which to draw the analogy between dramaturgy and the classroom. It is process-oriented as it can be used to examine interaction in progress. It is used as a descriptive device rather than as an evaluative one.

The most important factor concerning the analogic use of the Pentad is that it allows for examination of five crucial variables.

Act: names what took place in thought and deed

Scene: the background of the act, the situation

Agent: person or kind of person who performed the act

Agency: what means of instruments he used

Purpose: why the agent performed the act.[18]

In order to allow the observer more flexibility in the use of the Pentad, Burke established the ratio system. This system allows examination of any one part of the Pentad in relation to another. There are ten possible ratio comparisons for added insight into any communication situation:

Act-Scene	Scene-Agency
Act-Purpose	Scene-Purpose
Act-Agency	Agent-Purpose
Act-Agent	Agent-Agency
Scene-Agent	Agency-Purpose

There is a great deal of sociological theory underlying the Burkeian Pentad. Though some of this will be dealt with in this model, the Pentad will be used primarily as a simple construct through which to draw the analogy of the observational model. The Pentad was designed to be a practical method of analysis for human, verbal interaction. Only two studies have been located which apply it in situations other than basic dyadic communication. One is that of James Chesebro in his application of the Pentad to rhetorical ethics.[19] The other is found in the Holt Guide to English in which the Pentad is used as a construct through which to analyze journalistic composition.[20] The latter is more analogous to the use of the Pentad in this particular study. An analogy between Pentadic terms and the classroom as process can be found in the Appendix to this paper.

Non-Burkeian Dramatic Theory

This model will expand the Pentadic construct through the act variable. Accepting the inherent process dimension in both classroom and dramatic production, the reality of the classroom interaction cannot be fully examined through the Pentad alone. It must be expanded to include a more precisely defined process of development temporally from the beginning action to the end. The process orientation then becomes the heart of the analogy and is best discussed under Burke's act category. In order to maintain the idea of the dramaturgic analogy, the obvious dramaturgic evaluation of time development is the plot structure of the act. Though there are no comparable educational terms, the model will attempt to argue

that every class period in which teacher and students interact develops much the same as the plot structure of an act consisting of: exposition, rising action, sub-plots, crisis, anti-climax, climax, and denouement (resolution). This section of the analogy is perhaps the most conceptually compelling and provocative of the five. (See Appendix for possible application of act to classroom interaction.)

The Burkeian Dramatistic Pentad functions as a comprehensive construct which provides the basis of the dramaturgic analogy to the classroom. It enables the theorist to interlace dramaturgic concepts such as that of the plot structure of the act into the basic schema. It provides the observer of classroom behavior with the ratio system which enables him to isolate and compare interesting variable relationships. It fulfills the process requirement through specificity of its use in analyzing interaction in progress.

Notes

[1]This was the focal concept presented by Glasser in his October 28 1972 lecture delivered at the Changing Schools Conference in Denver, Colorado, sponsored by the Colorado Department of Education. It is also the basis of his book, Schools Without Failure.

[2]Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969), Chapter 1.

[3]See monthly issues of Phi Delta Kappan journal, January through December of 1972. At least one article appears in each dealing with either behavioral objectives or accountability.

[4]Robert F. Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives (Palo Alto, Calif.: Fearon Publishers, 1962), p. 8.

[5]David Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston Co., 1960), p. 24.

[6]Gerald Miller, Speech Communication: A Behavioral Approach (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1960), p. 33.

[7]David H. Smith, "Communication Research and the Idea and Process," Speech Monographs, XXXIX (August, 1972), 177.

[8]Dwight W. Allen and Richard M. Krasno, "New Perspectives in Teacher Preparation," The National Elementary Principal, XLVII (May, 1968), 38.

[9]Ronald Hyman, Teaching: Vantage Points for Study (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1968), p. 2.

[10]There are a number of extant observational models presently in use in educational research. James Becker has compiled seventy-nine of these in his anthology of observational models called Mirrors for Behavior (Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools, Inc., 1970). He explicates these models in a fourteen-volume series of the same name. He divides the major content focus of these seventy-nine models into seven categories: affective, cognitive, psychological, activity, content, social structure and physical environment of the classroom. All categories are based primarily on observation of human interaction as opposed to content-analysis of the lesson.

[11]Ibid., I, 5-8.

[12]Hyman, p. 2.

[13]Max Black, Models and Metaphors (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 24.

[14]Hyman, p. 1.

[15]The World Book Encyclopedia Dictionary (Chicago: Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1966), p. 599.

[16]Social theorists have traditionally used the dramatic analogy. Simmel and Dewey make reference to the social being as "actor." George Herbert Mead describes social enactments as games, play, drama. Talcott Parsons draws a model of man in society as an actor using expressive symbolism. Recently, Erving Goffman has drawn a detailed analogy between drama and everyday social interaction in Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.

[17]Hugh Dalzial Duncan, Communication and Social Order (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 5.

[18]Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1945), p. xv.

[19]James W. Chesebro, "A Construct for Assessing Ethics in Communication," Central States Speech Journal, XX (Summer, 1969), 105.

[20]William F. Irmscher, Holt Handbook of English (New York: Holt College Department of Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 19??), Chapter 3.

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APPENDIX

CHART 1

(SUGGESTED) PENTADIC ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM PROCESS

I.	ACT	Procedure of classroom process. What actually happens?
II.	AGENT	Teacher and/or students
	A. Co-Agents	Those members of classroom situation who promote the act, thus, further the process.
	B. Counter-Agents	Those members who overtly block the progress of the act, process.
III.	AGENCY	Methods used by agents to further the act. Examples would be visual aids, texts, teaching strategies, and people.
IV.	SCENE	Physicalization: room size, furniture arrangement, seating arrangement, etc.
V.	PURPOSE	In educational terms: the behavioral objectives, the choices.

The ratio system of Burke allows the teacher to analyze any combination of the above five variables in the system, thus making them all interrelated.

HYPOTHETICAL PLOT DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLASSROOM PRODUCTION

Plot Form		Projected Class Statements
I.	BALANCE	Calling of role, general exposition
II.	DISTURBANCE	Student presents question
III.	RISING ACTION (plan of protagonist)	Either teacher or class member or entire class take control by (1) supporting channel indicated by disturbance; "Yes, let's discuss that," or (2) taking a new tact; "Instead, today let's discuss the assigned chapter."
IV.	CONFLICT (obstacles)	Motivational aspect (for internal conflict); "For College Entrance most of you must be familiar with the formula for the cube."
V.	COMPLICATING	"Before you learn the cube formula you must master the formulas for the basic cylinders and rectangles."
VI.	SUB-STORY	"Group B may break off and begin discussion of methods to be employed in Chapter 6."
VII.	CRISIS	"Since most of the class does not have a mastery of the prerequisite knowledge, we must now learn it."
VIII.	CLIMAX	"You will now please demonstrate your knowledge of the formulas by taking this quiz."
IX.	RESOLUTION (denouement)	"Now that you have all successfully demonstrated this knowledge, please apply it to the problems in Chapter 8, as Group B has already done."